

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00

CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FEA-02 FPC-01 H-03

INR-10 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07 RSC-01

SAM-01 SCI-06 SPC-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00 PA-04

USIA-15 PRS-01 NIC-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /190 W

----- 120926

R 281015Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0898

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 4108

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, JA, UR

SUBJ: PRESS SPECULATION ON U.S. ROLE IN SIBERIA

REF: TOKYO 3965

SUMMARY: ASAHI PRESS HEADLINES REPORT MARCH 28 SPECULATING THAT DURING RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH JAPANESE BUSINESS LEADERS, SOVIET LEADERS QTE MOVING UNQTE TO EXCLUDE U.S. FROM SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. FONOFF OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, SAY SOVIETS POSED NO OBJECTION TO U.S. PARTICIPATION. END SUMMARY.

1. ASAHI SHIMBUN OF MARCH 28 CARRIED FRONT-PAGE REPORT WITH HEADLINES "MOSCOW MOVING TO SHUT U.S. OUT OF SIBERIA?". ARTICLE MAINTAINED THAT JAPANESE GOVERNMENT IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF NEW SOVIET PLANS FOR SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT (SEE REFTTEL), SINCE THEY COULD
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AFFECT JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH U.S. SOME FOREIGN MINISTRY

OFFICIALS, ACCORDING TO ASAHI REPORT, SAID ON OFF-THE-RECORD BASIS, THAT USSR MAY BE MOVING TO EXCLUDE U.S. FROM ANY ROLE IN SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT. FONOFF OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY NOTED THAT SOVIETS IN MEETINGS WITH UEMURA AND NAGANO HAD RULED OUT POSSIBILITY OF LIQUEFYING YAKUTSK NATURAL GAS AT NAHODKA. SINCE U.S. EXCELS IN LIQUEFACTION TECHNOLOGY, ASAHI CONCLUDED, THIS REPRESENTS AN EFFORT TO BAR U.S. PARTICIPATION.

2. E/COUNS RAISED QUESTION OF SOVIET MOTIVATION WITH KAGAMI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL, OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS BUREAU OF FONOFF. KAGAMI NOTED THAT FONOFF STILL INPROCESS OF DEBRIEFING UEMURA AND NAGANO, AND FOR MOMENT STILL HAD TO RELY ON CABLE REPORTS FROM JAPANESE EMBASSY IN MOSCOW. HOWEVER, HE SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT ASAHI REPORT PURELY SPECULATIVE.

3. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM JAPANESE EMBASSY, KAGAMI SAID, SOVIET LEADERS HAD POSED NO OBJECTION TO U.S. PARTICIPATION IN SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. SOVIET UNION WAS IN NO POSITION TO DO SO, HE ADDED, BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN AGREED AT TANAKA-BREZHNEV SUMMIT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO PARTICIPATION OF U.S. IN SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT. KAGAMI ALSO NOTED THAT USSR PROPOSAL RE NEW SIBERIAN RAILWAY RAISED ALL SORTS OF PROBLEMS, NOT ONLY RE ITS ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY BUT ALSO RE POLITICAL AND MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS. ACCORDINGLY, FONOFF WILL STUDY PROPOSAL "VERY CAUTIOUSLY".

4. KNOWLEDGABLE INDUSTRY SOURCE ALSO TOLD EMBASSY THAT USSR HAD NOT RAISED ISSUE OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS DURING UEMURA-NAGANO VISIT. SOURCE NOTED (AS HAD FONOFF OFFICIAL IN REFTEL) THAT KOSYGIN HAD MENTIONED NEED TO STUDY CONVERSION OF NATURAL GAS INTO METHANOL (RATHER THAN LNG) BEFORE SHIPMENT. SOURCE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS PRESENTED BY KOSYGIN ONLY AS ONE OF AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES.

4. COMMENT: WHILE FONOFF STILL SOMEWHAT UNSURE OF DETAILS OF CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN SOVIET LEADERS AND NAGANO AND CONFIDENTIAL

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UEMURA, THEY SEEM REASONABLY SATISFIED THAT RECENT CONVERSATIONS IN MOSCOW DO NOT INTERFERE WITH CONTINUATION OF JAPANESE POLICY OF COOPERATION WITH U.S. IN DEVELOPMENT OF SIBERIA.
SHOESMITH

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